

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 00320

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JA
SUBJECT: VICE MINISTER HOGEN'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY

1. IN VIEW OF SECRETARY'S APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH
VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SHINSAKU HOGEN ON
JANUARY 14, EMBASSY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO
OFFER FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON HOGEN'S CURRENT
POSITION AND POSTURE WITHIN JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY
ESTABLISHMENT.

2. ALTHOUGH NOT PERSONAL FAVORITE OR
PROTEGE OF FONMIN OHIRA -- AS IS AMB YASUKAWA --
HOGEN HAS BECOME INVALUABLE, ALMOST INDISPENSABLE
RESOURCE FOR TANAKA GOVERNMENT IN TASK OF MOLDING
POLICY AND WINNING ITS ACCEPTANCE WITHIN GOVERNMENT,
POLITICAL AND BUSINESS CIRCLES. TO SOME
DEGREE SUCH ASSISTANCE IS ONLY TO BE EXPECTED
FROM OFFICIAL WHO STANDS AT PINNACLE OF CAREER
FOREIGN SERVICE, BUT HOGEN HAS FUNCTIONED MORE
EFFECTIVELY AND WIELDED MORE INFLUENCE THAN
ANY OF HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS, INCLUDING
THOSE WHOSE PATRICIAN UNDERPINNINGS GAVE THEM
ADDED ADVANTAGE.

3. HOGEN'S STRENGTH DERIVES AS MUCH FROM FORCE
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OF CHARACTER AS FROM BRAINS AND EXPERIENCE. HE
HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS OWN MAN. HE HAS COMMON SENSE.
HE HAS INTEGRITY. COMING TO PRESENT POST 20 MONTHS
AGO, HE POLITELY BUT FIRMLY PERPETRATED QUIET

REVOLUTION: MERE SENIORITY WAS DOWNGRADED AS TICKET TO RESPONSIBILITY, ABLEST YOUNGER MEN WERE GIVEN MORE SCOPE AND AUTHORITY, AND HOGEN MADE CLEAR HIS OWN POSITION SHOULD NOW BE REGARDED AS ULTIMATE STEP IN PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND NOT STEPPINGSTONE TO WASHINGTON OR LONDON.

4. IN MATTERS OF BASIC POLICY, HOGEN IS KNOWN AS VIGOROUS AND UNSWERVING PROPONENT OF TWO PROPOSITIONS: JAPAN MUST REMAIN CLOSE ALLY OF UNITED STATES, AND COMMUNIST STATES -- PARTICULARLY SOVIET UNION--ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED. PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II, HOGEN WAS OUTSPOKEN MEMBER OF MINORITY WITHIN MINISTRY WHICH WARNED AGAINST AXIS ALLIANCE AND FAVORED COMPROMISE WITH US. TODAY HOGEN IS FIRM SUPPORTER OF US-JAPAN MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY.

5. HOGEN IS CONSIDERED SOVIET EXPERT WITHIN MINISTRY, BY VIRTUE OF SERVICE IN MOSCOW (1959-1961) AND AREAS OF SOVIET PROBES (CONSUL GENERAL IN BERLIN, 1957-1959, AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRIA 1967-1968, AND TO INDIA, 1968-1969). WHILE AWARE OF AND WELCOMING ADVANTAGES OF DETENTE, HOGEN HAS ALWAYS COUNSELLED CAUTION. HE HAS EXERCISED RESTRAINING HAND ON TANAKA GOVERNMENT'S RECENT INITIATIVES TOWARD RUSSIA AND CHINA, AND ONCE OBSERVED TO VISITING STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL THAT ANY RESUMPTION OF COLLUSION BETWEEN THOSE TWO POWERS AS IT EXISTED IN EARLY 1950'S WOULD CONSTITUTE MOST PROFOUND THREAT EVER TO FACE JAPAN. DECADE AGO HOGEN PERSONALLY FAVORED JAPAN'S ACQUIRING NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AS COUNTER TO NUCLEAR POWER OF ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS, BUT HE NOW SEEMS TO FAVOR ADHERENCE TO NPT.

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6. BOTH BY VIRTUE OF HIS WIDE-RANGING RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERSONALITY, HOGEN IS MORE AT HOME IN CONCEPTUAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSIONS OF BROAD FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES AND STRATEGY THAN MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES OR POLITICAL LEADERS IN JAPAN. HE IS, THEREFORE, NOT ONLY SYMPATHETIC TO U.S. EFFORTS TO BUILD A STRUCTURE OF PEACE BUT CAN BE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND BASIC CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS WHICH THAT ENDEAVOR INVOLVES. HIGH REGARD IN WHICH HE EVIDENTLY IS HELD BY JAPAN'S PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS, AND PARTICULARLY BY MORE IMAGINATIVE AND CREATIVE MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICERS IN HIS MINISTRY, INSURES THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. POLICY WILL HAVE SUBSTANTIAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT.

7. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT VICE MINISTER HOGEN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON OFFERS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR BROAD-GAUGE AND FRANK DISCUSSIONS ON MAJOR AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. IN OUR VIEW, SUCH DISCUSSIONS CAN BE OF SOLID VALUE TO EFFORTS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO REFASHION US-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH REALITIES OF THE 70'S.

8. DESPITE TOUR OF DUTY IN U.S. (CONSUL GENERAL IN LOS ANGELES, 1953-1955), HOGEN'S COMMAND OF SPOKEN ENGLISH IS SERVICEABLE BUT NOT STRONG, ABERRANT PRONUNCIATION MAKES HIM OCCASIONALLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. WE UNDERSTAND HIS BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS GERMAN. THE SECRETARY MIGHT CONSIDER EXPERIMENTING WITH THAT LANGUAGE AS PARTIAL ALTERNATIVE TO INTERPRETERS.
SHOESMITH

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